

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-11. (Cancelled)

12.(Currently Amended) A method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy and plated with a material containing nickel, comprising applying a protective film formation agent to a surface of a nickel coat that wraps around and adheres to at least a water-contact surface of the water-contact instrument to form a protective film, thereby suppressing the elution of the nickel, wherein the protective film consists essentially of a heterocyclic compound and a ~~straight-chain fatty acid~~ straight-chain fatty acid having a water-repellent property.

13.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 12, wherein the heterocyclic compound comprises benzotriazole, a benzotriazole derivative or thiazole.

14.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 12, further comprising forming a second protective film on a surface of said nickel coat at a water-contact section of the water-contact instrument using the protective film formation agent, thereby suppressing the elution of the nickel due to bimetallic corrosion via the second protective film.

15.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 14, wherein the nickel coat has pinholes and a second protective film is formed in the pinholes using the protective film formation agent so that the copper alloy and nickel are insulated.

16.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 12, wherein the protective film formation agent is used to form the protective film on a surface of a nickel coat on a water-contact section

of the water-contact instrument, thereby suppressing via the protective film dissolution of the nickel by wetting.

17.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 12, further comprising removing by rinsing a nickel salt adhering as a residual to an inside of the water-contact instrument and applying the protective film formation agent to at least the water-contact surface of the water-contact instrument to form a protective film.

18.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a wetted instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 17 and including lead, further comprising deleading a surface layer of the wetted section of the wetted instrument.

19.(Previously Presented) The method for preventing elution of nickel from a water-contact instrument made of copper alloy according to claim 18, wherein both the nickel salt adhering as the residual to the inside of the water-contact instrument and lead segregated on a surface layer of a water-contact section of the water-contact instrument are rinsed with a cleaning fluid containing a nitric acid and having a hydrochloric acid added thereto as an inhibitor.

20.(Previously Presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein the heterocyclic compound is benzotriazole.